

Carnegie Mellon University to host Trump as he continues attacks on universities, students and science

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The decision by the Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) administration to host President Trump for an “Energy and Innovation” conference on July 15 lend credibility to Trump’s attacks on universities, students and science as he extends his efforts to establish a dictatorship in America.

Since taking office, the Trump administration has conducted a non-stop attack on academic freedom: cutting research grants, deporting students and attacking free speech, all while cutting social programs, attacking the working class and escalating war.

At universities across the country, Trump is carrying through a fascist program of ideological control modeled on the *Gleichschaltung* (“synchronization”) carried out by the Nazis to subordinate all aspects of German society to their totalitarian control.

Harvard University is one of the first targets of Trump’s attacks. He has tried to force the university to pause admissions for international students, cut off billions in federal funding for research and attempted to control the direction of curricula, which would in effect turn the university into a propaganda arm of the state.

In his first weeks in office, on the orders of Trump, ICE detained dozens of international students for the “crime” of protesting the ongoing genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, including Mahmoud Khalil and Mohsen Mahdawi at Columbia University, Rümeyza Öztürk at Tufts University and Badar Khan Suri at Georgetown University.

Mahmoud Khalil was held for 104 days before protests and legal actions obtained his freedom. He is still fighting the threat of deportation.

Cornell University graduate student Momodou Taal was forced to leave the country as ICE was seeking to disappear him after he and other students filed a lawsuit

against the illegal deportations by the Trump administration.

The White House has slandered anti-genocide protesters in general as “anti-American, pro-terrorist agitators” who are creating an “unsafe” campus environment for Jewish students.

Trump’s Department of Justice has launched investigations into dozens of universities across the country, forcing several university presidents to resign and threatening others with millions in fines and loss of billions of federally funded research grants if they don’t fall in line with Trump’s fascist agenda.

At the same time, Trump has deported tens of thousands of migrants escaping brutal dictatorship, gang violence, poverty and war who are seeking asylum in the United States. Tens of thousands more have been placed in concentration camps facing the most inhuman conditions. All have been denied any form of due process under the law.

Trump has sent federal troops to occupy American cities, moved to deport naturalized citizens, denied birthright citizenship and threatened to deport American citizens to foreign prisons.

This is the fascist that the CMU administration has opened their campus to.

The “Energy and Innovation Summit” is being convened by Republican Senator David McCormick, and its main theme will be on the “convergence of AI and energy,” which will have “profound implications for economic competitiveness, national security and global leadership,” according to the official press release from the university. In other words, the ruling class wants to use the latest developments in science and technology to maintain its global position vis-à-vis its rivals, chiefly China.

The main subject of the summit is energy policy. Trump rejects the overwhelming scientific consensus that climate change is a worsening threat to humanity and is due to human actions. In his first term, he rolled back environmental regulations, such as the Clean Power Plan, which limited power plant pollution.

His energy slogan for his second term is “drill baby drill,” which means huge tax incentives for fossil fuel energy as he cuts all funding for climate research and solar and wind energy projects.

The renewed emphasis on domestic fossil-fuel energy sources is also driven by security considerations, especially establishing energy independence during future wars with global rivals like China and Russia.

Trump withdrew the US from the Paris Agreement in 2017 (effective 2020) and did so again in 2025 after Biden rejoined in 2021. While the agreement is completely toothless and inadequate in actually mitigating the effects of climate change, both withdrawals indicate the hostility of sections of the ruling class to any restrictions, even purely symbolic ones, on profit-making.

This summit reflects another step towards construction of an “academic-military-industrial” complex, with the subordination of academic independence to the dictates of the White House. It parallels a broader attack on public health and science and any program beneficial to the working class in order to direct federal spending towards the war aims of the ruling class.

His other attacks on science include firing 20,000 scientists and public health workers from the Department of Health and Human Services, scrubbing thousands of pages of scientific information from government websites and withdrawing the US from the World Health Organization.

By hosting Trump, the CMU administration is ingratiating itself to the would-be dictator and declaring its fealty. This should not be surprising given the university’s already deep connections to the state apparatus.

At \$3 billion, CMU receives more Department of Defense funding for research than most small private universities. This research funds a variety of contracts and grants, most of them going towards AI and drone projects. The university also has longstanding ties to aircraft manufacturer and defense contractor Lockheed Martin, which has provided F-35 fighter jets to the US and Israeli armed forces.

The obeisance of the CMU administration does not reflect the attitude of the CMU academic community as a

whole. Students, faculty and staff have already expressed their outrage over the conference and many plan to boycott it.

A boycott, however, is not enough. The fight against Trump requires a new perspective. Those who claim that electing Democrats in 2026 and 2028 will prevent dictatorship are sowing complacency. Ultimately, Trump and the Democrats share the same platform. They speak for the oligarchy.

Instead of appeals to the Democrats, this fight requires building an independent movement of students and academics across universities, and turning out to the most powerful social force, the working class as a whole. The movement must be based on the socialist program of reorganizing economic and social life, placing banks, industries, giant corporations and universities under workers’ control.

Only the Socialist Equality Party and its youth and student movement, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), fight for this perspective, insisting on the formation of rank-and-file committees within CMU and other universities to defend the interests of workers and students independently of the administration and both big business political parties.

The working class is reemerging as the main historical force. The drive towards world war and the ruling class demands for austerity and cuts to social benefits are being met daily by new strikes which the official labor organizations seek to betray.

We call on CMU students, staff, and faculty to build the IYSSE at CMU and to form rank-and-file committees in every department to coordinate the fightback against the subordination of CMU to the threat of dictatorship.

For more information and to join the IYSSE fill out the form below.



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